

PASSPORT To Health

Provider Newsletter

April—June 2003

Keeping Providers Informed

Inside this issue:

Health Care Preparedness for Bioterrorism	1
Prescribing OTC Medications	1
New PASSPORT Numbers & Referral Audit	1
Health Care for Children in Kinship Care	2
PASSPORT Updates and Reminders	2
PASSPORT Tools	3
Client Comments	4
A Disease Mystery	4
PASSPORT To Health Provider Relations Contact	4



Keeping Providers Informed
1-800-480-6823

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Health Care Preparedness for Bioterrorism

Given current political unrest in areas around the world, preparation for serious health threats such as bioterrorism is an unfortunate but serious undertaking among health care systems across the United States. In Montana, the Communicable Disease Control and Prevention Office has been granted an annual budget of \$10,181,468 in federal funds from the Centers for Disease Control and other federal entities to heighten preparedness for bioterrorism and other disasters.

Establishing bioterrorist preparedness within the health care system includes implementing processes such as:

- Assessing capacity
- Developing response planning at regional, state and local levels
- Developing communication infrastructure
- Ensuring biological laboratory capacity
- Ensuring hospital and other health care facility preparedness

Once in place, these elements will prepare health care systems for other emergencies.

New PASSPORT Numbers & Referral Audit

Two projects started off PASSPORT To Health's new year. During the last week of January and early February of this year, you all received your new solo or group PASSPORT numbers. The effective date for implementing these numbers was February 1, 2003. DPHHS implemented this change to increase security by removing old numbers that may have become circulated beyond their provider's office. We thank you all for your patience with the process!

The other project was the provider referral audit, sent to a random sample of over 300 providers in early February. PASSPORT asked participants to submit copies of written documentation for selected patient referrals from the last few years. The objective was to better understand how providers are currently performing and recording referrals. Next steps will include analyzing the results and developing educational outreach as needed. Findings will be reported in the next provider newsletter. Although participation in the referral audit has been mandatory, we appreciate your efforts and timeliness in complying.

Prescribing OTC Medications

Did you know that you can prescribe some over-the-counter (OTC) medications? Simply write the prescription as you would any other prescription, specifying the drug is OTC. The Medicaid prescription drug program covers the following prescribed OTC products:

- Laxatives
- Antacids
- Bronchosaline
- Head Lice Treatment
- H2 antagonist GI products

If these over-the-counter products are the appropriate product for your patients, prescribing them will not only benefit the client but will be less expensive for Medicaid!

*Health care
and other
resources for
foster children
living with
relatives.*

Health Care for Children in Kinship Care

More than 113,000 of Montana's children live with grandparents or other non-parent relatives. The parents may be temporarily or permanently absent for any number of reasons: illness, death, substance abuse, divorce, incarceration, economic hardship, or other crisis. The PASSPORT Program is interested in kinship foster care, as well as other foster care alternatives, because a number of these children are enrollees whose health is our concern.

Public and private agencies, and grassroots coalitions of relatives who are primary caregivers of children, have begun to work together in expanding health care and other services for these children and their families. In most cases, kinship caregivers may apply for state and federal programs on a child's behalf even though they are not the child's parent or legal guardian.

Health Insurance

Of most relevance for you to know as PASSPORT providers, especially if you have any foster children among your general patient population, is that help with health insurance is available to these patients' families.

Non-parent caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health insurance on behalf of the children they are raising through Montana's Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP) programs. In some cases, caregivers may also be eligible for free health coverage under Medicaid.

Cash Assistance

Cash assistance may be available through Families Achieving Independence in Montana (FAIM), and kinship care families may check out their eligibility for food stamps to help meet their children's food and nutrition needs.

Subsidized Guardianship

A state-funded subsidized guardianship program for children who are not eligible for federal funding is offered to children in foster care who are diagnosed with a physical, mental, or emotional disability; who are members of a minority group six years old or older; or who are members of a sibling group for whom guardianship will be established with the same guardian.

If any of your clients would like more information about how to apply to these programs, they can call 1-877-KIDS-NOW.

PASSPORT Updates and Reminders

- Have you changed your mailing address, phone number or PASSPORT contact person lately? Make sure you notify PASSPORT To Health by mail (PO Box 254, Helena, MT 59624) or fax (406-442-2328). Remember that PASSPORT staff cannot give out certain provider information over the phone unless we can verify the caller's identity through an updated and current provider file.
- Closing your practice for a few days? Please remember that PASSPORT providers are required to provide, or arrange suitable coverage for, needed services, consultations, and approval of referrals *during normal office hours*.
- Remember to get PASSPORT provider approval *before* you treat a client who is not on your enrollee list.



**Wishing you a Dose of
Healthy Spring Fever!**



For questions regarding the PASSPORT To Health Program, please call the Montana Medicaid Provider Help Line at 1-800-480-6823.

PASSPORT Tools

Being a PASSPORT To Health provider has many benefits, but sometimes it may feel like there are many details to keep straight. The following is a list of several provider tools that have been developed to help you manage your clients' care.

- **Monthly Enrollee List**

This list is mailed out to you so that you can see your current



PASSPORT clients' names, birth dates, addresses, Medicaid numbers, new or current enrollee and basic/full coverage status, and (for child clients) whether a Well Child Check Up may be due.

Review the list to make sure there is a client-provider relationship. You may want to contact any clients you have not seen, to make sure they view you as their PCP.

- **PASSPORT Provider Handbook**

The handbook is mailed to you when you join PASSPORT. It describes the program and provider benefits and responsibilities in detail. General information includes an explanation of PASSPORT's primary care case management structure, the differences between FULL and BASIC Medicaid services, and The Well Child Program (EPSDT).

There is also information regarding specific elements of the program, such as PASSPORT provider eligibility and requirements; caseload limits; the referral and authorization processes; client enrollment/disenrollment processes; the case management fee; and automatic assignment. The handbook includes a list of important phone numbers and web sites.

- **PASSPORT To Health Provider Newsletter**

This quarterly newsletter is designed to keep you abreast of any changes and upcoming events related to PASSPORT, and to provide you with reminders of existing program elements. The newsletter also features articles of more general public health interest, and information about other programs in DPHHS.

- **Montana Medicaid PASSPORT To Health Referral Form**

This form is a tool to document referrals of your PASSPORT clients to other providers. It includes spaces to be filled in with information regarding the client, the provider to whom the client was referred, services and length of

referral, limitations and follow-up instructions. The referral form was reproduced in the January-March 2003 Provider Newsletter. A copy is also available by calling the Provider Help Line.

- **PASSPORT Provider Help Line (1-800-480-6823)**

The Help Line is operated out of a call center and staffed with live operators, 8 am to 5 pm, Monday-Friday. They are knowledgeable about PASSPORT To Health, as well as Medicaid in general. This Help Line is also the way to reach the provider relations manager for more specific questions.

- **ACS Help Line (1-800-624-3958)**

and Trainings
This number is also staffed with live operators between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. They are your resource for specific billing-related issues.



The ACS trainings occur several times a year and include provider education regarding billing issues and a session dedicated to the PASSPORT To Health Program. You can call the ACS Help Line for a schedule.

- **DPHHS Website**

Montana's Medicaid Services website at www.dphhs.state.mt.us/hpsd has several other resources for you and your clients. For providers, there is *Medicaid News*, *Medicaid Enrollment*, *Provider Manuals*, and on line versions of the PASSPORT To Health and Claim Jumper newsletters, among other resources. Manuals that are a good resource for PASSPORT information include *General Information for Providers I and II* and *Hospital Services-Outpatient*. For your clients, there is *Your New Handbook*.

- **NEW: Wallet Cards**

We are always looking for new ways to help you manage your clients' care. Currently, we are creating wallet cards the size of a driver's license to give clients as reminders on different topics.

We hope these tools are helpful, and we always welcome your suggestions to make them better.

Valuable tools to help providers understand PASSPORT To Health include materials, two Help Lines, and knowledgeable staff.

Client Comments

In the midst of a harried day, it may be hard to keep in perspective all the good that you are doing when you serve PASSPORT To Health clients. Likewise, you may not always hear the appreciation from the clients when they are in your office. But we do, and here is what PASSPORT clients have to say about you:

"Dr. Kurtz is a loving, caring doctor!"

"My doctor is understanding and he listens to me. He takes time and does not treat me like a Medicaid client."

"We are completely happy with our health care provider: Dr. Kathryn Neff at Glacier Medical!"

"I want to let you know that this program is great for my child. I know she will always get the help she needs when she is sick or hurt. And that is a nice feeling to have. Thank you."

A Disease Mystery: Suspected New Tickborne Disease in Montana

A March press release indicated that state health officials are looking for help in solving a mysterious disease. This may be something that you want to be aware of among your own patient population.

"In recent years during spring and early summer we have received reports from physicians of human illness with rashes similar to Lyme disease at the site of a tick bite - but it's not Lyme disease," according to Dr. Todd Damrow, state epidemiologist for the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Damrow and his staff are heading up a research project in collaboration with county health departments and the federal Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton, which specialize in infectious diseases, to find out more about this tickborne disease. DPHHS is interested in obtaining ticks detached from humans. "If people remove an embedded tick, we'd like them to put it in a zip-lock bag and take it to their

County Health Department," says Jim Murphy, communicable disease surveillance coordinator for DPHHS. Also, people who notice a red, expanding rash developing from the site of a tick bite within two weeks should see their health care provider.

The cause, frequency and seriousness of the condition are not known, although it is thought to be uncommon. One hypothesis Damrow is considering involves a new agent, similar to Lyme disease, that has adapted to the wood tick and is being transmitted to humans. "We could have a new disease here," he said. DPHHS will make the findings available once they are known.

Lyme disease was identified in the 1970s, among a cluster of patients in New England exhibiting symptoms similar to rheumatoid arthritis. Cases of Lyme disease have appeared in the Midwest, Oregon and California. DPHHS has documented no cases of Lyme disease acquired in Montana so far. For more information, you can contact Dr. Kammy Johnson at (406) 444-7453.

Tickborne disease with unknown origins is under investigation.

PASSPORT To Health Provider Relations Contact

Maria Rogne, whom some of you may know from her site visits to your office and other provider outreach, has moved on to another position in the health care field. While the provider relations position is being filled, you can still get your questions answered at the same toll free Provider Help Line: 1-800-480-6823.